

PATENT

Attorney Docket No. IGT1P047/P-529

5 **WIDE AREA PROGRAM DISTRIBUTION
AND GAME INFORMATION COMMUNICATION SYSTEM**

RELATED APPLICATION DATA

[0001] The present application claims priority from U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/266,427 for WIDE AREA PROGRAM DISTRIBUTION AND GAME INFORMATION COMMUNICATION SYSTEM filed on February 2, 2001, the entire disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference for all purposes.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] This invention relates to gaming networks including gaming machines such as video slot machines and video poker machines. More specifically, the present invention provides methods and apparatus for distributing gaming applications and related information over a wide area network such as, for example, the Internet or World Wide Web.

[0003] Typically, a master gaming controller in a gaming machine controls various combinations of devices that allow a player to play a game on the gaming machine and encourage game play on the gaming machine. For example, a game played on a gaming machine usually requires a player to input money or indicia of credit into the gaming machine, indicate a wager amount, and initiate a game play. These steps require the gaming machine to control input devices, including bill validators and coin acceptors, to accept money into the gaming machine and recognize user inputs from devices, including touch screens and button pads, to determine the wager amount and initiate game play. After game